

**00807**

**1962/10/27**

with  
[REDACTED]  
attachment

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

October 27, 1962 4 P.M.

POLICY DRAFT - REPLY TO KHRUSHCHEV.

Dear Mr. Khrushchev:

I have your letter to me dated \_\_\_\_\_. I have studied with great care the development of your thinking and I very much appreciate the frankness with which you have exposed your feelings and thoughts in the matter which now concerns us so deeply.

There are statements contained in your letter with which I heartily agree and there are some with which I am in strong disagreement. I do not at this time feel that it would be profitable to deal specifically with these statements beyond saying that I am shocked that you should have authorized the installation in Cuba of completed nuclear weapons in this clandestine manner.

I do not believe that the theory that no matter how deadly and destructive a weapon may be, including a hundred megaton nuclear bomb, that it does not assume the character of an offensive weapon unless and until soldiers are available to go in and occupy the area previously devastated by it. I find it difficult to think that there are many who could reasonably subscribe to this interpretation.

We have the deepest desire to keep Cuba free of any invasion or foreign domination. The whole tradition of our relations with Cuba has been laid in its freedom and the maintenance of that freedom. I would therefore have no difficulty in accepting the general proposal which I read in your letter to me to the effect that you will rid Cuba promptly of these weapons and, if this is done, the US will in return give further assurances of Cuba's

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

territorial integrity and freedom from any threat of US invasion.

I would recognize this proposal as an effort on your part to make a substantial contribution to the solution of the serious problem which now stares us in the face.

I have received an additional message from you which seems to introduce an entirely new thought, namely, that in return for your withdrawal of those weapons from Cuba, a withdrawal of similar weapons should be made from Turkey.

The problem which is seriously threatening the peace of the world is the sudden interposition of nuclear weapons and the capacity of launching them, on to the island of Cuba. The imbalance which this has precipitated must immediately be rectified. It is this problem which has caused the crisis which faces us and it is the one with which the US is now deeply concerned. It is not the presence of a NATO base in Turkey which has precipitated this crisis. It is the presence of these weapons in Cuba with which it is essential to deal promptly.

You must realize, Mr. President, that the Turkish base is a component of the defensive system of Europe and to suggest that the NATO system of defense be altered by reason of the sudden installation of these weapons in Cuba would be as inappropriate as for us at this time to demand new arrangements under the Warsaw Pact.

With the NATO composition of the immediate threat a definite starting point I believe could be made toward a subsequent consideration of the many long range problems which exist between us many of which you list in your subsequent message to me. These

might include a consideration of military dispositions in connection with disarmament plans, and I would particularly hope that out of the present crisis that a prompt conclusion of an agreement on a nuclear test ban would be stimulated.

I assure you, Mr. Khrushchev, I am as deeply aware as you are of the consequences which would be visited upon both of our countries as well as the world in the event of a nuclear war, and we naturally have the deepest anxiety to find the means by which such a calamity can be avoided.

I have the hope that a prompt conclusion of an arrangement such as I have outlined in respect to Cuba would not only avert this crisis but would lead to a more general settlement and a very much improved basis for permanent peace.

Sincerely,

McCloy added following comments: Somewhere in the reply there should be included a demand that the work on the bases be promptly stopped.

This has been drafted as a fairly discursive answer to Mr. Kh to his much more lengthy note. I have somewhat the instinct that the form of this note may be an important factor in prompting and motivating his action. Perhaps Amb. Thompson would have some ideas about this. I have included the reference to offensive weapons because it appears to me to be a particularly weak point and one if letter ever gets published might have a real effect. Moreover, I think it is wise to respond at least to some degree to argumentation that Mr. Kh so lengthily put forward (it is the weakest point in the argumentation, by the way.) I did not spell out in this letter the details or the "modalities" of how weapons are to be gotten rid of. I would simply leave it on the assumption that he first gets rid of them and then we give further assurances of territorial integrity.

JJMCCloy